

VZCZCXRO7811  
PP RUEHDBU  
DE RUEHMO #3022 3501437  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
P 161437Z DEC 09  
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5673  
INFO RUEHDX/MOSCOW POLITICAL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 003022

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/16/2019

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [RS](#) [UP](#)

SUBJECT: GOR ON UKRAINE ELECTIONS, SECURITY ASSURANCES

REF: KYIV 02114

Classified By: Acting Political Minister Counselor David Kostelancik for reasons 1.4 (b,d)

¶1. (C) On December 15, MFA 2nd CIS Department Director Viktor Sorokin reiterated that the GOR did not favor any candidate in the upcoming elections in Ukraine. He stated that the current political crisis in Ukraine was the result of problems in the governmental system caused by President Yushchenko shifting more power to the President and away from the Rada. Sorokin claimed this shift was an unconstitutional change, and noted that the election would not solve Ukraine's internal political crisis. On bilateral ties, he said that the transition to a post-Yushchenko relationship would likely lead to less nationalistic, more pragmatic policies from Ukraine, and relations would become less politicized and more focused on economic issues. For example, he expected the new Ukrainian President to avoid divisive hype about the famine (Holodomor) of the 1930s.

¶2. (C) Sorokin also addressed Yushchenko's concerns about security assurances in light of the follow-on U.S.-Russia START agreement (Ref A). He said that prior to the December 4 U.S.-Russia joint statement on START, Yushchenko had written to Russia requesting further bilateral security assurances. Sorokin stated that the GOR believed the security assurances in the 1994 Budapest Memorandum were sufficient and emphasized that the GOR would continue to guarantee Ukraine's security according to these prior commitments.

¶3. (C) In a similar vein, Ukrainian Acting DCM Miroslava Sherbatink told us December 15 that Ukraine is also seeking further assurances from the U.S. in addition to its 1994 Budapest Memorandum commitments. She cited the Russian invasion of Georgia in 2008 and disagreements with Russia over the future status of the Black Sea Fleet as reasons for Ukraine's disquiet.

¶4. (C) Sorokin, who has covered Ukraine for over 18 years, said that while relations between President Yushchenko and President Medvedev had frozen, working-level contacts had stayed strong. He acknowledged that in the 1990s, Russia made mistakes in trying to draw Ukraine into a close military and economic union, which turned out to be contrary to the desires of the Ukrainian elite and people. He underlined that Ukraine was Russia's "number one strategic partner," highlighting their bilateral trade, energy cooperation, and cultural and historical connections. While Russia wanted to "preserve Ukraine as stable and unified," with normal relations with the United States and Europe, he stressed that Russia insisted on Ukraine's neutrality.  
Beyrle